

And Tonight I Long For Rest

by NothingImpossible

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Summary: She needs rest, he knows, he sees, she has needed it for quite some time, with everything that's happened sinceâ€¦ Bloody hell, it's been a long few months. My thoughts after seeing the rooftop scene in the promo for 5x17 and the look in his eyes after she promises to rest broke my heart into tiny pieces.

And Tonight I Long For Rest

****Disclaimer: ****Not my characters, not my world. Just my imagination borrowing them for a bit

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><p>She walks toward him, blinking exhaustion with every step. "Sorry I fell asleep," she mutters.<p>

"I'm glad you did," he says quietly, watching her approach. She seems more than tired, it's an exhaustion that seeps into her very soul, weary in a way he's never seen in her before, like a candle with barely enough fuel to burn as it flickers mightily. She needs rest, he knows, he sees, she has needed it for quite some time, with everything that's happened sinceâ€¦

Bloody hell, it's been a long few months.

"It's not the best way to keep watch", she replies, peering over the edge of the building.

"I've got it under control," he says as she turns to him. Her eyes are rimmed with red, dark shadows stretching beneath them in the dim light of the Underworld night, and he knows it's his turn to be the strong one. He can see the remnants of her nightmare clouding her eyes, fear and anxiety featured prominently along with her exhaustion.

"Do you realise this is the first time you've slept since you rescued me?" he asks, his voice gentle, but he knows it's been even longer. The weeks they had together after Rumplestiltskin was banished all that while ago was probably the last time he'd seen her calm for more than a day at a time, but it didn't last more than that, it couldn't. The Queens intruded on their peace, bringing the Crocodile with them and all the frenzy to avoid darkening her heart, only to have her volunteer herself to the curse he'd vowed to destroy, sending them all to Camelot. She hadn't slept as the Dark One, the dreamcatchers he'd stolen from her once he'd turned was a testament to the insomnia that chiseled away at her during that time.

And after his death? She was still wearing the same clothes she had that night, he doubted she had taken the time to catch up on sleep properly before heading down to this accursed realm. In all that time, she'd never once truly caught her breath, the storm of events crashing over her, again and again, leaving her truly gasping for air in its wake.

And it's not over yet.

She pleads with him to let it go, her eyes begging him silently as she says, "I will sleep for weeks as soon as we defeat Hades, I promise."

He knows he can deny her nothing, this woman filled with the fire of love and desperation, but he still wishes they have time to take a few moments, to rest, to sleep, but alas, there is no safety here, not yet. He wants nothing more than to take her from this wretched place, to wrap his arms around her and rock her as she falls asleep, his hand tangled in her hair as she finally learns to breathe deeply of the peace she so deserves.

The guilt she tried to convince him is undeserved creeps in, his fault for turning dark so easily, for dying, again, for being the reason they are all here in the first place. He'd promised her he'd try not to think that way, but it's so damned hard with her breaking in front of him, cracks in her indefatigable strength shivering in the cold night air.

He has nothing here, no skills, no plans, he barely has the courage to go through with the hastily outlined plan. He feels useless to the others, useless to her - he's dead, dead, and she's about to tumble in after him. He can't let her join him, not here, not in this pit of despair that sucks all hope from those who linger. He has to rescue her, now, he needs to bring her home, for her, so she can finally stop chasing the monsters he's brought into their lives.

And he's scared, he's bloody terrified. They're about to go up against the god who extracts hope in blood, who tormented him relentlessly, and so painfully, the lingering memories of his wounds flaring in his mind. It's not even just the agony, the physical torment, though he'd be lying if he claimed that doesn't give him pause. The joy, the appreciation Hades had for the artfulness of the torture, fills him with fear. It's a game, to him. It's beauty in pain, and he saw that in his eyes each time the god came for him, admiring his suffering as a Captain looks upon the slicked-smooth workings of his ship.

But he says nothing, his eyes hopefully masking all that he feels,

and he looks into her eyes, and she back. She's waiting for him to argue, to fight back, but he has no intention of ever being away from her again, even if it's just on the other side of an argument.

So he smiles gently. "All right," he says, his voice lullaby soft against the screaming knives of ice in the air. "Then let's get you home, shall we?"

He watches as the storm fades somewhat from her eyes, the tempest driven back by her trust in him, her love, and his cold heart warms with the intense affection and pride that she believes in him so fully.

But the exhaustion remains as she nods her acceptance, a tired smile on her face. He's fighting for her now, he'll never stop fighting for her, and with something to fight for he knows he can face the emotions that try to weaken him.

"Yeah," she whispers. "Let's go home."

End
file.